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For Immediate Release
2008ARR0019-001068
July 9, 2008

Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation

B.C. RECOGNIZES CONTRIBUTION OF ABORIGINAL ELDERS

PRINCE RUPERT – An additional $25,000 doubles the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation's contribution to the annual First Nations Elders Gathering, Minister Michael de Jong announced today.

"We recognize the crucial role of elders in all Aboriginal communities and the importance of honouring their knowledge and acknowledging their significant contribution to handing down history and tradition to new generations. This additional funding brings our ministry's contribution to $50,000," said de Jong. "By supporting this important gathering, we enrich B.C.'s diverse cultural fabric and foster new understanding between Aboriginal people and other British Columbians."

The 32nd Elders Gathering is hosted by the Kaien Island Elders in Prince Rupert. It began on Monday, July 7 and finishes Wednesday, July 9. Approximately 3,000 Elders from communities across the province are attending.

The annual gathering celebrates the contribution of Elders in their communities, as advisers, teachers and leaders and for their invaluable work keeping traditions and Aboriginal culture alive for younger generations.

"The Elders Gathering works to strengthen the inter-social and community links which bind the First Nations together," Elders co-ordinator Darlene Harris Wolfe said today. "This additional funding will strengthen our ability to reach out to First Nations communities and preserve the richness of Aboriginal culture for our children and children's children."

In past years, the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation has provided $25,000. This year, the provision of an additional $25,000 will provide increased support to the Gathering.

Funding for the Elders Gathering is also provided by the Anglican Church Healing Fund, the United Church Healing Fund, the New Relationship Trust, the City of Prince Rupert, the Northern Savings Credit Union, the District of Port Edward, the Nisga'a Lisims Government and the Nisga'a Prince Rupert Society.

Support for the Elders Gathering demonstrates the Province's commitment to the New Relationship with all First Nations based on respect, recognition and reconciliation, bringing all the people in B.C. closer together and recognizing the major contribution of Aboriginal communities to the diversity and richness of the province.

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For further information on the New Relationship, please visit http://www.gov.bc.ca/arr.

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